*126. *[The Questioner (Shri Prakanta Warisa) was absent. For answer vide page 31 infra]*

*127. *[The Questioner (Shri P. Prabhakar Reddy) was absent. For answer vide page 33 infra]*

*128. *[The Questioner (Shri Satish Pradhan) was absent. For answer vide page 38 infra]*

Import of Palmolein from Malaysia

*129. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to give concessions for articles including Palmolein from Malaysia as per the agreements signed during the visit of our Prime Minister to that country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government would take some steps to help the coconut farmers who are facing problems due to the import of Palmolein from Malaysia?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) No, Sir. No Agreement for giving concessions for articles including palmolein was signed during the visit of the Prime Minister of Malaysia.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) In the Budget for this year, import duty on crude coconut oil has already been increased from 45% and 75% and on refined coconut oil from 50.8% to 92.4% along with other edible oils. Further, in order to protect conconut farmers the import duty on copra, coconut and desiccated coconut was also increased from 40.4% to 76.8%. Besides, procurement under Price Support Scheme at MSP will be continued to help coconut growers.

SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: This is an issue which relates to the life of crores of people in Kerala. Time and again, we have been raising this issue in this House. What is the plight of the coconut farmers today? Now they are getting the lowest price in the last fifty years. We have been requesting

to increase the import duty on palmolein. Whenever there was an increase, it was just marginal. It was also reported in the newspapers that when the hon. Prime Minister visited Malaysia, he had given an assurance to the Malaysian Government that they were going to reduce the import duty on palmolein. That is what was reported in the newspapers. So, I want an assurance from the Government that they will not reduce the import duty on coconut and palmolein oil any more.

डा० रमण: महोदय, यह प्रश्न आया प्रधानमंत्री की मलेशिया यात्रा के दौरान पामोलीन ऑयल पर इम्पोर्ट ड्यूटी घटाने के संबंध में कि क्या कोई एग्रीमेंट हुआ। मैं माननीय सदस्य को यह बताना चाहूंगा कि मलेशिया यात्रा के दौरान जो एम०ओ०यू० हुए और जो ऐग्रीमेंट हुए, उसमें पामोलीन पर से इम्पोर्ट ड्यूटी घटाने के संबंध में कोई ऐग्रीमेंट मलेशिया सरकार से नहीं हुआ।

SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Sir, my second supplementary is that, three days back, it was reported in the newspapers that Kerala was not given a single pie. The prices are going down. The farmers are not getting any help from the Government. Not even a single penny has been allotted by the Central Government to the coconut farmers. So, I want an assurance that you will not reduce the import duty on palmolein. My question is very specific. It should be answered properly. I don't want to know what the Prime Minister said during his visit to Malaysia.

DR. RAMAN: Sir, we are not reducing. First thing is that after 01.03.2001, the present position is अन्य जितने भी ऑयल्स हैं—सन फ्लावर, ग्राउंड नट ऑयल, पामोलीन के ऊपर जो हमारे पास बाउंडिड हैं, उसके अगेंस्ट 01.03.2001 को यदि 55 प्रतिशत ड्यूटी थी, उसको बढ़ाकर 75 परसेंट कर दिया है। वनस्पति के लिए उपयोग होने वाले पामोलीन के अतिरिक्त 55 प्रतिशत से बढ़ाकर 75 प्रतिशत कर दी गयी है। यह क्रूड ऐडीबल ऑयल की पोजीशन है। ग्राउंड नट ऑयल पर बजट के बाद ड्यूटी को 35 प्रतिशत से बढ़ाकर 75 प्रतिशत किया है और सन फ्लॉवर के ऊपर भी 35 प्रतिशत से बढ़ाकर 75 प्रतिशत ड्यूटी की है।

SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: No; it had been reported in the newspapers that...*(Interruptions)*. That is the question. That should be answered ...*(Interruptions)*. It has been reported that a further reduction of 10 per cent ...*(Interruptions)*.

श्री जीवन राय: इम्पोर्ट ड्यूटी में रिडक्शन ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री एस० एस० अहलुवालिया: अब आपको क्या हुआ? ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री ए॰ विजय राघवन: यह सारे साउथ इंडिया का क्वेश्चन है। ...**(व्यवधान)**...

डा॰ रमण: फार्मर्स को प्रोटैक्ट करने के लिए हमने ड्यूटी इन्क्रीज की है। वहां हमारा उनके साथ कोई समझौता नहीं हुआ कि हम उसको डिक्रीज करेंगे और जो पोजीशन है, at this position, I will give you a detailed ...(*Interruptions*).

श्री नीलोत्पल बसु: पोजीशन यह है कि किसान मर रहा है। ... **(व्यवधान)**...

SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Sir, I want you protection. My specific question is ...(*Interruptions*). It has been reported in the newspapers that there will be a further cut of 10 per cent in the import duty ...(*Interruptions*). I want an assurance ...(*Interruptions*). Then, what is the use of putting a question here? ...(*Interruptions*).

डा॰ रमण: प्रधानमंत्री जी की यात्रा के दौरान कोई समझौता मलेशिया की सरकार के साथ नहीं हुआ है।

SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: You give a specific answer. What is the answer? ...(*Interruptiosns*).

श्रीमती सरला माहेश्वरी: आगे भी नहीं होगा, यह आश्वासन दे दीजिए। ...**(व्यवधान)**...

SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Sir, is this the answer? Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Minister of Finance is sitting here. If the hon. Minister cannot answer, let the Minister of Finance say something on this? ...(*Interruptions*)...

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): I cannot speak for other Ministries ...(*Interruption*).

SHRI JIBON ROY: The South has been adversely affected, as the oil prices have dropped very much. ...(*Interruptions*).

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Mr. Chairman, Sir, why is the Cabinet Minister not here? ...(*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Murasoli Maran has taken leave. ...(*Interruptions*). Now, Mr. Faleiro.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Mr. Chairman, Sir, agriculture has collapsed in our country. The Western Coast ...(*Interruptions*). No; you don't know what you are talking; I myself am a farmer. I know agriculture has collapsed, because coconut is one of the main products in the Western Coast. I would like to know from the hon.

Minister of Commerce whether the Government is contemplating any strategy, on the lines of the developed countries, as even the developed countries have subsidised so much. What is the Government doing to protect our agriculturists? Do you expect our farmers to commit suicide? Specifically, how are you coordinating with the other developing countries, who also depend on agriculture, so that before the WTO Agreement comes, a united front is projected to protect our people, the majority of whom are poor farmers.

डा॰ रमण: सर यह, एग्रिक्लचर डिपार्टमेंट, फाइनेन्स डिपार्टमेंट और हमारे मंत्रालय से संबंधित मिला-जुला सवाल है। ....(व्यवधान) माननीय सदस्य बहुत सीनियर सदस्य हैं। इनकी शंका के बारे में मैं बताना चाहता हूं कि मिनिमम सपोर्ट प्राइज में हमने पिछले साल 2000-2001 में कोपरा मिनि बॉल के ऊपर 778 करोड़ रुपए के प्रक्योरमेंट खरीद कराई। हमने इतना बड़ा स्टाक 2 लाख 72 हजार मीट्रिक टन कोपरा पिछले साल खरीदा और सपोर्ट प्राइज पर खरीदा, ताकि किसानों के हित की रक्षा हो। आज हमारे पास इतना बड़ा स्टाक जमा है और अन्य जो ऑयल सीड्स हैं उनके लिए भी सरकार प्रक्योरमेंट के लिए तैयार है। जहां-जहां से इसकी डिमांड आती है, हम खरीद के लिए तैयार हैं। किसानों के हित की रक्षा के लिए सरकार पूरी तरह से चिंतित है।

*130. *[The Questioner (Shri C. Ramachandraiah) was absent. For answer vide page 38 infra.]*

*131. *[The Questioner (Miss Mabel Rebello) was absent. For answer vide page 42 infra.]*

*132. *[The Questioner (Shri Yadlapati Venkat Rao) was absent. For answer vide page 44 infra.]*

Leasing of 50 Seater Aircraft by IA

*133. SHRI K. M. SAIFULLAH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Airlines has decided leasing of 50 seater aircraft to provide facility of connectivity to smaller towns in the country;

(b) whether alongwith providing travel by air facility necessary infrastructural facilities have also been provided at small town airports; and